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Report of the Security Council mission on the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. Introduction

1. In his letter dated 30 May 2006 (S/2006/344), the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council had decided to send a mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 10 to 12 June 2006, which would be led by Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière. Following consultations among the members of the Council, it was agreed that the composition of the mission should be as follows:

Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière (France), head of mission

Ambassador Basile Ikouebe (Republic of the Congo)

Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark)

Ambassador Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana)

Ambassador Shinichi Kitaoka (Japan)

Counsellor Vitaliano Gallardo (Peru)

Ambassador Peter Burian (Slovakia)

Ambassador Augustine P. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania)

Minister Counsellor William Brencick (United States of America)

2. The terms of reference of the mission are annexed to document S/2006/344.

3. The Security Council mission visited Kinshasa from 10 to 12 June, where it met with the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the four Vice-Presidents, separately; the bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC); a forum grouping members of some of the 273 political parties participating in the electoral process; the bureau of the High Media Authority; the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT); an ecumenical group of religious leaders; and a group of women's non-governmental organizations focusing on the issue of sexual violence.

4. The mission also met with the representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the local business community represented by members of the Fédération des entreprises

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du congo (FEC); and Christophe Lutundula, Member of the Parliament of Transition and chairman of the Special Parliamentary Commission in charge of evaluating the legitimacy of the contracts concluded during the 1996-1997 and 1998 conflicts. The mission also met with the Joint Commission on Security Sector Reform and, separately, with the members of the European Union mission of assistance for security sector reform (EUSEC), with the European Union police mission in Kinshasa (EUPOL), as well as with the deputy commander of the European Union standby force.

5. The mission was briefed by the senior leadership of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, William Lacy Swing, and the two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haile Menkerios and Ross Mountain. The mission also received a briefing from the Chairman of the Group of Experts on the arms embargo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), Ibra Déguène Ka. The mission also met, informally, with the staff of MONUC and of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

6. The seventh visit of the Security Council to the Democratic Republic of the Congo was made as the transitional process is entering its final phase, which should end with the holding of free and fair elections open for participation by all of the people and political parties of the country.

II. Political and electoral process

7. The Security Council mission stressed the need for the elections to be held in accordance with the calendar announced by IEC, in a peaceful climate free of intimidation, fear and the use of derogatory language. While highlighting the strict impartiality and neutrality of the international community in the electoral process, the mission urged the transitional authorities to ensure a level playing field for the elections, including equitable access to the public media for all the parties and candidates. At the same time, the candidates and political parties need to act responsibly in accepting the result of the polls and not resort to violence in the event of electoral disputes, which, the mission emphasized, should be resolved through the appropriate mechanisms. The mission also called for the publication of the full electoral timetable, including the dates of the possible second round of the presidential elections and provincial and local elections.

8. President Kabila shared the concerns of the members of the Security Council delegation regarding the deterioration of the political climate in the run-up to the elections, including acts of political intimidation and limitations on the freedom of access of some of the smaller political parties to the media. There is also a reported bias among the national media towards some parties. In reference to calls by civil society and political parties for the holding of a political dialogue concerning the electoral process, President Kabila explained that shortly he would be convening a meeting of all of the transitional institutions, the four Vice-Presidents, the Presidents of the National Assembly and Senate and the Presidents of the five institutions in support of democracy, including IEC. The objective of the meeting would be to reach a common understanding of the political situation and to reassure the

population. He reaffirmed the commitment of the transitional institutions to hold the elections in accordance with the dates announced by IEC. President Kabila stressed that the 30 July election date should be respected. The management of State affairs during the period following the first round of the presidential elections and leading up to the establishment of the elected institutions, including the Government, would also be discussed at the proposed meeting.

9. President Kabila acknowledged the recent deterioration in the political environment, in particular in the tone and content of the campaigning that has started before the official period to commence on 30 June. Some political actors had been encouraging the dissemination of hate messages and the exclusion of some sections of the population from the electoral process. Some media sources were also promoting the potentially dangerous national identity concept termed *congolité*. He emphasized the commitment of the Government to decisively address these matters. The President deplored the recent acts of intimidation, which had reportedly targeted some of the political parties and candidates. He recognized the difficulty in organizing the first elections held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 45 years. While noting that the elections would likely not be perfect, he vowed to address the concerns of the candidates and promote a secure environment during the elections.

10. President Kabila said that the formation of a credible and disciplined army was an ongoing process. During the transitional period, the Government capacity to make progress in implementing all of the priorities outlined in the transitional agenda had been limited. The organization of the elections had been the main focus. The electoral process had benefited from substantial international technical, logistical and financial assistance, while insufficient international assistance had been provided for security sector reform. Many challenges remained in reforming the security services, including the military and police. The President condemned the acts of gender-based sexual violence committed by the military and police. He noted that the Government had taken steps to address the matter, such as arresting of a number of military personnel, including senior officers.

11. The President acknowledged that many of the priority tasks on the transitional agenda, including security sector reform and national reconciliation, would not have been achieved before the elections. The elections, he added, were not an end in themselves but rather an event that would establish the legitimate conditions for the continuation of democratic reforms. Post-electoral priorities should focus on the reconstruction and development process, including improving security, and the daily living conditions of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, the process of army integration should continue after the elections.

12. President Kabila noted the high expectations of the population and the need for the newly elected Government to rapidly deliver peace dividends after the elections. Public expectations would need to be managed to avoid destabilizing the Government, which, he acknowledged, would have only a limited capacity to immediately address the population's most pressing concerns. Concerted and sustained international support will be required to assist the elected Government in making progress on security sector reform, the extension of State authority and good governance. President Kabila hoped that a level of support similar to that which had been provided for financing peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would also be made available for the development of the country after

the elections. Further efforts would be required to ensure a high level of representation of women in the post-electoral institutions.

13. The Security Council mission thanked President Kabila for his assistance to MONUC towards obtaining the release of the seven Nepalese peacekeepers detained by a local militia leader in Ituri since 28 May 2006.

14. The Vice-Presidents expressed serious concern at the prevailing climate of intolerance, caused by acts of political intimidation, and the public incitement by some parties along ethnic and nationalist lines, including speculation about the nationalities of some presidential candidates. The Security Council mission urged the Government to provide the High Media Authority with the financial support required to carry out its work, including guaranteeing access to the media for all political parties. Vice-Presidents Bemba and Ruberwa both noted the need to guarantee equity in the access of all political parties to the media. The Security Council mission urged Vice-President Yerodia to promote tolerance during the electoral campaign.

15. While expressing their firm commitment for the holding of the presidential and national legislative elections on 30 July, as announced by IEC, Vice-Presidents Bemba, Ruberwa and Z'Ahidi Ngoma called for the convening of a political dialogue among the main institutions of the transition. They suggested that such a forum should also include the leaders of the main political parties and would help to clarify some of the technical constraints affecting the electoral timetable, as well as to reassure the population as to the commitment of the authorities to implementing the announced electoral timetable and ease growing political tensions.

16. The Vice-Presidents, in particular Bemba and Ruberwa, emphasized the need to ensure the credibility of the electoral process, including through the impartiality of the Supreme Court and the other Courts, which are to resolve electoral disputes, and the security services. Vice-President Bemba felt that the proposed *comité des sages* should play an essentially technical role in providing assistance to the Supreme Court with the adjudication of electoral disputes. He also noted the importance of the presence of a large number of electoral observers in polling stations, particularly during the vote-counting process and the publication of the results.

17. Vice-President Ruberwa was of the view that the general improvement in the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would allow for the holding of the elections without major security incidents. However, some pockets of insecurity remained in the Kivus and Ituri. Vice-President Ruberwa welcomed the deployment of the European Union standby force, which would reassure the population concerning the security of the electoral process.

18. Vice-President Ruberwa also called for additional efforts, including from MONUC, to address the continued presence of foreign armed groups, in particular the former Forces armées rwandaises (FAR)/Interahamwe in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He also proposed that the immediate security priority for the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and MONUC should be to continue maintaining pressure on the armed groups, to prevent them from disrupting electoral operations. President Kabila and Vice-President Ruberwa also acknowledged that the bilateral relationships between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its eastern neighbours had improved in recent months.

19. The mission warmly congratulated IEC for the progress made in organizing the elections, including the registration of over 25 million voters; the successful holding of the constitutional referendum; and the publication on 30 April of the 30 July date for the holding of the presidential and national legislative elections. The IEC Chairman, Father Malu Malu, said that the final electoral timetable would be published on 28 June, after the completion of the registration of the candidates for the provincial elections. He also noted that a second round of the presidential election could be held at the same time as the provincial elections. The Security Council mission urged IEC to make all possible efforts to minimize the time period between the first and second rounds of the presidential elections, if a second is necessary.

20. The Commission explained that there were four major outstanding challenges in ensuring the successful completion of the electoral process:

(a) The political environment has significantly deteriorated in recent months. Steps needed to be taken urgently to ensure respect for civil liberties, free and equitable access to the media for all of the political parties and candidates, the security of the electorate and candidates, and the integrity of electoral procedures, in particular the counting of votes and announcement of the results;

(b) Concerns remained regarding the fragile security situation in some areas in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, it was noted that a large number of national police personnel, who had been trained with MONUC support, would be providing security during the electoral operations;

(c) Additional international assistance was required for the other institutions in support of the transition, particularly the High Media Authority, which is expected to play a critical role in regulating the media environment during the electoral campaign. The rapid establishment of the *comité de sages* would also be important in strengthening the credibility of the electoral process;

(d) There is a shortfall of some $46 million in the electoral budget.

21. The Commission indicated that it was working with some of its international partners towards strengthening the capacity and credibility of the Supreme Court of Justice and the provincial courts, which will be responsible for the adjudication of electoral disputes. It is also taking steps to widely publicize the rules and guidelines governing the electoral dispute mechanisms among the population, political parties and candidates.

22. The Security Council mission urged IEC to increase the civic education campaign. It was noted that voters across the country should have the best possible knowledge of the complicated electoral and voting procedures, before the polls are held. Furthermore, the credibility of the elections would be a determining factor in ensuring post-electoral stability. The monitoring activities of a large number of national and international observers, at polling stations and vote-counting sites, would be critical in helping ensure the credibility of the electoral process and to minimize disputes over the results. The mission also urged IEC to take all possible steps to ensure transparency and integrity in the process of result-collection and vote-counting. The mission suggested to IEC that it test its procedures for this through the conduct of pilot tests. Commission personnel, who would be deployed at some 50,000 polling stations, should also be provided with adequate means of communication.

23. In their meeting with the bureau of the High Media Authority, members of the Security Council mission highlighted the importance of ensuring free and equitable access to the media by all the political parties and candidates. The High Media Authority was urged to remain credible, objective and impartial in regulating and monitoring the media during the electoral process. The Chairman of the High Media Authority indicated that inadequate support had been received for its operations from the international community and the Transitional Government, which had negatively affected its ability to implement its mandate. He also explained that it faced difficulties in regulating the large number of private media outlets in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many of which were owned by the main presidential candidates.

24. At the same time, in the view of the Chairman, the early launch of campaigning by some candidates before the commencement of the official period on 30 June had contributed to an increase in political tensions, including the unchecked use of hate and derogatory messages, as well as personalized verbal and physical attacks against some candidates. While acknowledging the difficulty in regulating the private media, the Security Council mission called on the national authorities to work towards ensuring that the electoral campaign was based on programmes addressing the concerns of the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and was carried out in a spirit of dialogue and national reconciliation.

25. The mission recognized the important role played by the religious authorities in encouraging the peaceful holding of the elections, as well as in providing support to the population in preparation for the elections. At its meeting with religious leaders it was informed that Church groups had launched a voter-education campaign in July 2004. The religious leaders also emphasized the need for all candidates to peacefully accept the results of the polls. They explained that there were high popular expectations that the elections would be held on the announced dates and stressed that any attempts to delay the elections, such as the holding of a protracted political dialogue or consultations, should be discouraged.

26. In its meeting with a large gathering of representatives of the political parties participating in the electoral process, including many of the presidential candidates, the Security Council mission underlined the historical significance of the elections and indicated that the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had high expectations regarding the elections. While reiterating the commitment of the international community to the sustained provision of assistance to the electoral and peace processes in the country, the mission stressed that the primary responsibility for the successful completion of the electoral process rested with the population and political actors.

27. The mission also urged the political parties and their leaders to approach the elections in a spirit of tolerance, peace and reconciliation, and to promote programmes which included the post-electoral priorities, including reconstruction, security, governance and reconciliation, and other issues that were in the best interest of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Personalized attacks, hate speech and the intimidation of candidates, including through the use of the State security apparatus, should be avoided and strongly condemned. The mission also insisted on strict respect for the results of the polls.

28. The political parties and candidates expressed serious concerns regarding the deterioration of the political climate, including an increasing lack of respect for civil

liberties by the authorities, a lack of equal access to the media by all of the political parties and the increasing threats against and harassment of candidates. The political parties highlighted the need for the security services to remain impartial in providing security for the elections. Security needed to be ensured throughout the voting process, the counting of ballots and the publication of results. Many political parties called for the convening of a political dialogue to review the electoral process, including the electoral calendar.

29. Discussions between the Security Council mission and CIAT focused on the electoral process, security sector reform and post-electoral issues, including the issue of ensuring transparent economic management. Members of CIAT called for strict respect for the electoral timeline. They expressed concern at the increasingly negative tone of the unofficial electoral campaign and called for measures to ensure equitable media access for all of the political parties and candidates, including providing the High Media Authority with adequate support in regulating the media during the campaign period. Members of CIAT also stressed the need for the Government to ensure the security of journalists.

30. Members of CIAT shared the concern of the mission regarding the need for the transitional authorities to ensure continuity in the management of the State in the period following the first round of the presidential elections, should a second round be required. CIAT also felt that the stakeholders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should reach a consensus, as early as possible, on the definition of a parliamentary majority, which would allow for the rapid designation and installation of an elected Government after the election of the President and members of the National Assembly. Members of CIAT also discussed the future of their institution, which will be dissolved when the political transition of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is complete. Several members believed that a successor organization with similar membership could more effectively support the new Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it continued its reform process.

III. Security issues

31. All of the mission's interlocutors emphasized that the authorities needed to continue working towards ensuring post-electoral stability, including by providing security for the population and territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was also noted that progress on security sector reform was critical for the future stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Efforts in that regard must therefore be intensified. The transitional authorities and the leadership of FARDC should be encouraged to focus on the quality and discipline of the new army, rather than on the size of the armed forces. The Joint Commission on Security Sector Reform could play a useful role in ensuring the coordination of security sector reform efforts in the post-electoral period.

32. The mission took note of the progress achieved in the integration of the army since its last visit in November 2005, including the integration of an additional six brigades. The mission also welcomed the steps taken by the national authorities in implementing some of the recommendations of the EUSEC report, particularly with regard to the payment of salaries to the integrated brigades. However, concern was expressed at the serious lack of discipline of the integrated brigades and the widespread human rights abuses committed by the army. The mission stressed that

military justice should apply to all members of the armed forces at all levels, and urged the authorities to accelerate army reform after the elections to ensure the creation of a professional and accountable army, capable of securing the population and territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The mission also urged the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to carefully monitor lapses in military leadership in FARDC and demand accountability where individual responsibility for corruption or other abuses is established.

33. The Security Council mission received detailed briefings on the efforts of EUSEC and EUPOL. The advance team from the European Union standby force also briefed the mission on progress made in deploying the advance elements of the force to Kinshasa. The European Union standby force will work closely with and provide support to MONUC in implementing its mandate in support of securing the electoral process, in areas where MONUC military capabilities are limited. The force will deploy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a period ending four months after the holding of the first round of the presidential and national legislative elections. The mission encouraged the European Union standby force and MONUC to implement an information strategy so that the role of the force in supporting the electoral security arrangements is understood by the population and stakeholders of the country.

34. In its meeting with the Joint Commission on Security Sector Reform, the Security Council mission noted that the first two phases of the *brassage* process had resulted in the establishment of 12 integrated brigades, some of which are currently deployed and operational in the eastern part of the country. The third phase of the *brassage* process had now been launched by FARDC, which should lead to the establishment of an additional two integrated brigades. However, the integrated brigades still lacked adequate equipment, discipline and cohesion.

35. The Joint Commission on Security Sector Reform indicated that it was working towards the integration of 18 integrated brigades which, it was hoped, would be established in time for the elections. It acknowledged that the *brassage* process had been inadequate to create a professional army, as most of the soldiers had had no formal military training. At the same time, the size of the Democratic Republic of the Congo made any movement of troops, for integration or deployment, time-consuming and put considerable demands on the limited resources of the State. The Government had recently decided to increase from $10 to $25 a month the salaries of military and police personnel. It was noted that better pay and training for the units should help improve the discipline of the soldiers. These steps should help curb human rights violations. The FARDC leadership recognized that the poor state of military justice had jeopardized efforts to end impunity in the military. The recent census of the army would provide some basis for further administrative reforms.

36. The mission welcomed the considerable progress achieved by EUSEC in securing and supervising the regular monthly payment of salaries to the integrated brigades. EUSEC has also been successful in obtaining the separation of the salary payment chain from the command structure of the units. There is some concern that the political requirement to continue creating integrated Congolese armed forces following the elections, through the *brassage* of combatants from the various former belligerents, may jeopardize efforts to create a professional army with strong operational capabilities.

37. The mission noted with much satisfaction the progress made by MONUC and EUPOL, in preparing the Police nationale congolaise (PNC) for its role in ensuring security during the electoral process, including the training by MONUC of some 50,000 police and the mentoring of the PNC crowd control units in Kinshasa by EUPOL. The mission also welcomed the close coordination between the partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that were supporting the police reform process.

38. The authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo noted that PNC would be responsible for securing the elections. However, in regions where armed groups remain active, such as Ituri, the Kivus and northern Katanga, FARDC would contribute to the security arrangements. The mission welcomed the preparation of a draft plan for the reform of the police by Congolese and international experts, which provided for the entry of police personnel into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which would be implemented soon after the elections.

39. The mission noted that some 123,159 combatants had joined the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process since the start of the transitional process, of whom 9,659 had reintegrated into civilian life and 38,293 had joined the army. A total of 80,000 weapons had been collected and handed over to FARDC. The Commission nationale de démobilisation et de réinsertion estimated that approximately 70,000 combatants still needed to enter the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

IV. Governance

40. The Security Council mission expressed deep concern at the reported mismanagement of the economy, including the considerable increase in extrabudgetary expenditures since late in 2005. The mission urged the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities, in particular President Kabila and the four Vice-Presidents, to take the steps necessary to ensure the transparent management of State resources. It stressed that this was vital for restoring the confidence of the donor community, including the World Bank and IMF, which in March had suspended their assistance programmes to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A shortfall in donor support following the elections could threaten the stability of the elected Government, which was expected to be subject to significant public pressure to rapidly deliver peace dividends to the population. Support for the United Nations-sponsored Humanitarian Action Plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be critical for accelerating the delivery of pro-poor socio-economic programmes.

41. Vice-President Bemba, who presides over the Transitional Government's Economic and Financial Commission, explained that the Transitional Government had been successful in improving macroeconomic indicators. Nonetheless, he acknowledged a lack of transparency and discipline in the management of some strategic economic sectors, including the mining and forestry sectors, and expressed his disappointment at the failure of the National Assembly to review the findings of the Lutundula Special Parliamentary Commission in charge of evaluating the legitimacy of the contracts concluded during the 1996-1997 and 1998 conflicts.

42. The Security Council mission was briefed by United Nations Development Programme, IMF and World Bank representatives on the challenges facing the Transitional Government and prospects for stability and reconstruction in the post-

electoral period. The mission noted the suspension by IMF and the World Bank of their respective economic and budgetary assistance programmes owing to concerns regarding the financial mismanagement of the State. The apparent lack of commitment of the transitional authorities to maintaining strict budgetary discipline during the period preceding the new Government's installation was also of concern. The Fund is currently negotiating a Staff Monitored Programme with the Government, which should assist the Congolese authorities in maintaining macroeconomic stability by restoring budgetary discipline, including measures intended to increase transparency, such as a temporary moratorium on contracts in the mining and forestry sectors.

43. The World Bank, the United Nations and some bilateral donors are considering the establishment of a policy framework aimed at improving governance and strengthening dialogue with the elected authorities, including support for increased transparency and key reform priorities. The Security Council mission noted that the cooperation of the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be critical for ensuring the effective implementation of reforms. The mission appealed to donors to find ways of providing additional support for security sector reform.

44. In its meeting with FEC, the Security Council mission highlighted that the growth of local economic activities would be critical for promoting stability and reconstruction in the post-electoral period. The Fédération noted that it was preparing a document to be shared with the elected Government, including proposals on improving the business environment and promoting economic recovery and the long-term political stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the establishment of an impartial judiciary, investment in infrastructure and the promotion of good governance. The FEC delegation expressed particular concern regarding the need for durable improvements in the security environment, which is critical to the growth of private business, and called for sustained international support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the elections.

45. The mission also received a briefing from Christophe Lutundula on the findings of the Special Parliamentary Commission in charge of evaluating the legitimacy of the contracts concluded during the 1996-1997 and 1998 conflicts, including the illegal exploitation of natural resources. It was noted that the transparent management of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be a key priority for the elected Government. Mr. Lutundula also provided mission members with an analysis and an action plan to address the issues of corruption and transparency in resource exploitation, including a proposal for the creation of a national commission under the new Government to control the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

46. The mission subsequently received an informal briefing from the Chairman of the Group of Experts on the arms embargo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on its activities since the extension of the Group's mandate under resolution 1654 (2006), for a period lasting until 31 July 2006.

47. Members of the Security Council mission also met, in Kinshasa, with a group of women's non-governmental organizations focusing on the issue of sexual violence. The mission expressed concern at the continued prevalence of incidents of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of which are committed by members of FARDC and the armed groups. The adoption by the elected Parliament of legislation punishing acts of sexual violence would be useful

in addressing the matter; furthermore, the Government needed to urgently take effective action to end impunity within the armed forces.

48. The mission also discussed the future of MONUC and possible changes in its mandate in the post-transition period with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and MONUC staff. Several members suggested that MONUC should work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as well as the Congolese authorities to develop specific options for the Security Council's consideration in its deliberations on the future of MONUC.

V. Recommendations

A. Elections

49. The Congolese authorities and stakeholders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are encouraged to ensure that the announced date of 30 July, for the holding of the first round of the presidential elections and the national legislative elections, is respected.

50. Should the political actors of the Democratic Republic of the Congo choose to convene a formal dialogue on the electoral process, which could be useful in defusing the tense political climate, it is important that such a dialogue not lead to further delays in implementing the announced electoral calendar.

51. It is critical that the political parties carry out the electoral campaign in accordance with the code of conduct for political parties, as prepared by the Independent Electoral Commission, and that the electoral campaign be conducted in an atmosphere of calm and tolerance. Debates should be focused on the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including programmes prepared in the interest of the population. Hate language, incitements to ethnic hatred and exclusion should not be tolerated.

52. The transitional authorities should ensure equitable access for all of the political parties and candidates to the press and other media, which must remain impartial during the electoral period. Additional support should be provided for that purpose for the functioning of the High Media Authority, which should remain impartial and credible throughout the process.

53. It is also critical that the security services remain attentive to the importance of ensuring the independence of journalists and providing for the security of the electorate and candidates. Acts of intimidation and violence cannot be tolerated.

B. Security sector reform

54. Efforts aimed at reforming and restructuring the army, including the integration of coherent units and the administrative reform of the military command structure, need to be urgently pursued.

55. A more systematic effort is required to put an end to impunity within the ranks of the security services by bringing to justice the alleged perpetrators of human rights violations among military and police personnel and relieving higher-ranking officers who show serious leadership deficiencies.

56. The international community should be encouraged to increase its support for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

C. Governance

57. The Congolese authorities are encouraged to make efforts to meet the expectations of the international financial institutions with regard to the requirements for the resumption of assistance from IMF and the World Bank.

58. The continuation of the functioning of the State and its institutions, including transparent and responsible economic management, in the period between the holding of the first polls and the establishment of the elected Government, is critical to ensuring the stability of the country.

D. Sexual violence

59. The Government should take steps to address the continued prevalence of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including taking urgent action to end impunity within the armed forces.

E. Mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

60. The Mission is encouraged to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as well as the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to develop specific options for the consideration of the Security Council in its deliberations on its future mandate.